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strength for there the Bambara place the poles of attraction which, in the universe, uphold all bodies. It is said: "All bodies accept the force of attraction of the four angles," fari be bi sõ seleke nuni mana barika la.

which determined "the space of yo in its own thought," is expressed by the number 22: "yo, darkness of creation, in the depth of the secret space of night, master of the foundation of the 22 rotations, great bearer of vibration, great builder of the marrow of bones (1).

[782
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821]

1. yo dali dyibi, ɲu kene gundo tyema, munumunu mu tani fla siki ba, yere done ba, kolow nye kono dlaba, kono being the ancient term for marrow.

This prayer is recited in honor of yo when a woman's pregnancy is first noticed; it is also recited at eclipses of the sun.

These 22 spirals stirred up all that yo contained in spirit; nugu, "entrails, intestines," which carried all things and man within itself; yalã, "seed of the air," which placed the voids in all /7/ parts of space"; fayã, "seed of the wind"; sani, "seed of water"; yerẽ, "seed of fire"; yelẽgu, "seed of earthly matter" (2). The rotations of yo

2. fayã, sani, yerẽ (in ancient language), and yelẽgu were at the origin of the four elements, air, water, fire and earth, all of which did not yet exist but were to appear later.

The seven elements composing yo are represented by signs, reproduced in Figure 1 (1 to 7).

put them in order and kept them under the force of attraction (mana). In other words, carried away by this whirlwind, both magnetic and creative, the elements became organized, one in relation to the other; in this way the 22 terms of the universe, as thought out by yo, were determined; these terms are also the 22 periods of its thought:

778 understandable that the strength of the large pembele should be preserved intact since it represents the world. No ritual concerning it is celebrated alone by the man in charge without the presence of a council of elders. Its four corners can be scraped only under worthwhile circumstances for, according to the informant, the god pembele will not tolerate his being used for trifles. As the corners are gradually scraped off and consequently the nyama contained in these corners is reduced, the earth becomes worn out. And if the earth should lose its nyama, all would be empty of its substance; the millet would still grow but its stalk would yield no grain... women would bear no children, no longer having any nyama. Bereft of strength, people would no longer be able to fight. The earth would subsist, but would be sterile" (1).

1. S. de Ganay, op. cit., p. 200.

The Balanza

824 The tree balanza, the plant form of Pemba's metamorphosis, vanquished by Faro, is no longer worshipped by men. However, the Bambara's attitude towards it and certain ritual gestures of which it is /38/ sometimes the object, recall the time when, after having spread its domination over all creation, it introduced death to the human species.

[761] In certain settlements, the belief is that whoever rests in its shade dies, the tree having taken his dya. In others, women still make it [782] offerings of karite oil, despite advice from men who have informed them of its inefficacy. They lie at its base, simulating illness, agony, and then death to recall the painful events that have brought them to men; finally they touch the ground successively with each of their four principal articulations as a sign of submission, before smearing the tree trunk with the oil they have brought. In still others, [843] in order to recall that births used to take place near the tree, pregnant women are presented by their husbands to the tree to each childbirth.

The fields surrounding the settlements in the region of Ségou are covered profusely with balanza. The device of Ségou, which tells of the history of the town, enumerates the names of the trees planted at the time of its founding. This device also mentions kokuruni (literally, little humped back), the balanza of Banankoroni (pl. I, a),

761 776 842 After the marital couple has absorbed the fruit, a smooth-bodied embryo with nonarticulated limbs is formed in the maternal womb. /58/ It is at this moment that the couple consummate the sexual act in the course of which the woman "takes into herself the entire body of her husband": the upper part through the eyes, the lower part through the genital organs. The masculine seed located in the seven principal articulations (knees, elbows, ankles, and spine) transmits them to the embryo. The body, originally similar to the body of the spirit, thus becomes that of a human being.

The spirit restows the spiritual forces after the man has mated for the second time with his wife. If the woman bears a single child it means that the man, in the course of the second union, formed the double of the first germ, but was not permitted to procreate twins.

761 776 843 774 Faro disposes of the child's life and nature. He decides all that the child will be and will do, and determines his destiny from the moment the seed is placed by him in the womb. The foetus then develops with no further modifications until parturition, at which time it receives the spiritual principles, the soul, ni, and the double, dya, which will be his throughout his life. It is at this time that the inner relations of the individual to the social group to which he belongs intervene. Although Faro gives each child a new body, he animates this body with spiritual forces drawn from the family reservoir. The [775] newborn child is the direct heir to the ni and the dya of a deceased member of the family, actually of the one, whatever one's sex, who died shortly before the birth of the child (1).

1. The reincarnation of the deceased's spiritual principles, however, is not an absolute rule. Faro is the master of an infinite reserve of souls. Twins, albinos, and certain other children are born with the ni and dya as yet undetermined. They originate respectively in the second sky (kaba dye) and in water (dyi sumale). Further study on this particular point is necessary to complete this investigation.

761 776 774 775 The consequence of death was, in effect, to separate the corpse from the forces that animated it. The ni, by appropriate ritual, had been preserved on the altar of the ancestors (2), and the dya had left

774 is the object of constant concern during agrarian rituals. The role of the soul of plants is particularly noticeable in their medicinal uses. Drawing a remedy from a plant may cause its death, liberating its spiritual principles for the benefit of the sick man. Because of this, such an act is equated with a blood sacrifice.

With the exception of the ngovo tomato, plants have no dya. The shadow (suma) of a plant is not independent like that of a man or an animal. It exists only through light effects and its movements are caused by the air and the wind moving its leaves and branches. This is what the Bambara means when he says that the dya has a life of its own and depends on Faro, whereas the plant's suma depends on the spirit Téliko, master of the air.

774 787 804 843 An individual's dya can be known and his temperament and life possibilities assessed by measuring his shadow on the earth at noon. The unit employed is the little finger, which is a corporeal symbol of the person. If a pregnant woman is thus measured, the sex of the child may be predicted.

774 [576] When a boy or a girl gets married, it is said of them: a ye a dya furu: "he (or she) has married his dya." For it is impolite to say that a person married anyone but his spiritual double. Besides, the union of the couple is repeated by the union of their dya which like themselves are of opposite sex. [595 851] In olden times, male twins married the same woman and the latter's dya was taken over by Faro in the Niger. The child she conceived was the son of both husbands.

589 791 Some men do not marry. This is true of the Soma, the religious diviner attached to the major Bambara societies. Initiated in the course of a solitary sojourn in the bush, he left his dya with the invisible spirits. This is a prerequisite to the gift of double sight with which he is endowed as well as a protection against possible dangers to the dya when it remains in contact with the earth, or when it approaches other humans. The true spouse of the Soma is his dya: he may mate only with it on a fixed date when the spirits return it to him for this purpose. /61/

The tere

774 The tere was inflicted by Pemba on Mousso Koroni in order to diminish her power at the time he was pursuing her. This explains its complexity: it is at once the character of a man, his strength,

304 /184/ they did. Faro, Teliko, Soba! You who are a man, your number is three; three of the penis, three of the twins, designs of the penis, it is the tradition, withstand it; Faro!" (ter) /repeat three times/(1).

1. Bolokodɛ̌ i fa, i moke, o ta fa,
o ta fa were, o ta fa klo masamaw ye
munyu, i yere ka munyu u cǒko la,
faro, teliko, soba, o ye če ta saba ye,
wulu wo, flani wo, kolo nyeke, lada
do, i ka munyu; faro (ter).

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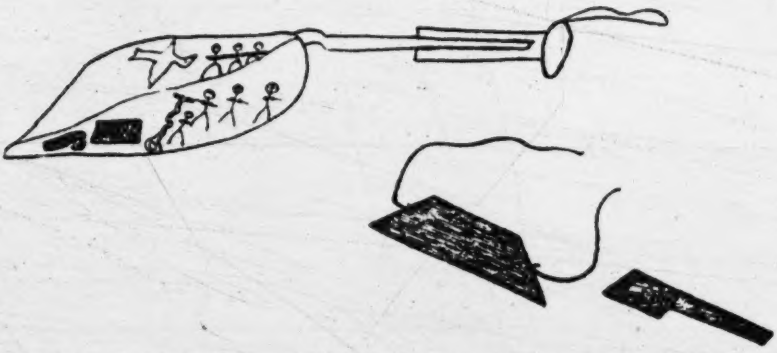

Fig. 15. — The circumcision knife decorated with ritual designs: three men and four women (representing the number seven); the bee eater symbolizing fire; the string; the small board; and the hammer used for the operation (these last two objects are reproduced on a larger scale to the right). (Drawing by an informant.)

304 After the removal, the operator makes scars upon the child's penis,
326 called faro nyeke (literally, signs of Faro). Under the muscle wulu
831 dyuru (literally, rope of the penis), a small hole is carefully made. Since the penis is considered a source of strength, the muscle which maintains it and erects it binds the circulation of the blood and helps man in all his acts. It is through this muscle that man transmits nerves to his children. A straight organ, firmly held in check, keeps the man and his descendants from numerous illnesses; the aim of this mutilation is to obtain complete and well formed foreskins and clitoris in the children of the party concerned. After the perforation,
304 the operator places in the orifice a little pepper and tomato juice
326 while saying:
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304 326 843 "Strong (when you form) the child, (you who form) the child (in the) womb, give it to Faro" (1).

1. Fariña dẽ, dẽzo dẽ, i ka di faro ma.

The embryo, placed in the feminine womb by Faro, receives force and virility from the pepper and is developed with the help of the tomato.

304 326 Two small holes are carefully made symbolizing man and his dya, while the following prayer is recited:

"Two holes of the penis; I draw the twins and I do it well, the skin of the person is captive, the skin of the person (gives) the twins; withstand them; Faro" (ter) (2).

2. Wulu wo fla, flani mba ti ka nẽ,
moko wolo ye dyo ye, moko wolo ye
flani nye, i ka munyu faro (ter).

"The skin of man, they say, and his entire body are miserable, captives. He is condemned to work, sweat, and suffer. But these two perforations indicate that man is always called upon to procreate twins, the visible images of Faro. Lacking them, he may have numerous children who will return to him, in sweat and work, the seed which he has placed in the maternal womb and which gives shape to the seeds given by Faro."

At the root of the penis, small lines, kolo nyeke, are made with the knife while the operator says:

"Mark of the penis, the genital organ receives this scarification because of the child (whom it will procreate); it is for this that man may be courageous; the one who has (this scar) is respected; great Faro, satiation of Faro" (3).

3. Kolo nyeke, wulu ti kũye dẽ koye,
a ye ẽe fariña ko ye, min ya ke bonyedo,
faro ba, faro fa.

/185/ These recall the scars inflicted upon man's body and symbolize the desired multiplication of his offspring. Finally, they indicate the superiority of the one who has withstood and accepted pain.

764 were kept by the village patriarch and the cult of the ancestors was celebrated upon these altars.

At the present time, the body is buried during rites in which the Komo plays an important role for the initiates. As soon as a member 763 is seriously ill, the family head places upon the dying man's chest 778 the portable altar, kere la boli ni, which belongs to the community. He does not leave the bedside in order to catch the last breath. Immediately after death, without turning back or saying a word to anyone, he goes to the chief of the Komo who places the object in the [775] sanctuary where the altars are kept. The soul is introduced into the nimara boli (1).

[843]

1. See p. 192. In former times, the soul of the dead man was caught between two gourds which were then joined together and hung on the conjugal bed. When the woman became pregnant, the gourds were broken over her abdomen in order to make the soul penetrate the foetus. Later on this method of transmission of the soul was no longer possible because of the impurity brought about by "frivolous discussions regarding the arrangements and situations of creation."

764 Upon his return to the house of the deceased, the family head brushes his hand over the dead man's face to gather his nyama which he then entrusts to Pemba by rubbing the cavity in the family pembele "so that the total of the work he has accomplished during his life will not be dissolved by death, but will be like /190/ an accumulated force serving the community, and so that his intelligence, his qualities, and his skill in different kinds of work, especially in agriculture, will not be lost but will be found in other members of the family. The [778] block of wood, acting as an altar for storing the forces, preserves this nyama until a new birth occurs in the family" (2).

2. S. De Ganay, "Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara," p. 199.

787 826 12. From the thirty-ninth to the forty-second, pettiness, stupidity, misenya, (fem.).

13. From the forty-third to the forty-fifth, judgment, calmness, basigi (masc.).

14. From the forty-fifth to the forty-ninth, incoherence, agitation, hakiliwuli (fem.).

[804] These groupings are symbolized by little sticks whose length increases for male measures and decreases for female measures.

Example: if the measure of the individual stops at group 7, he will be represented by four sticks (males) of increasing size and by three others (females) of decreasing size and different aspects.

/216/ Whatever their number, these sticks are then placed in the following manner: those of the nerves in a dry receptacle, those of the flesh in millet flour, those of the bones on a hard stone, those of the liquids in water, those of the male genitals on the testicles of a male goat, those of the female genitals on the vulva of a mare, those of the breasts in karite oil, those of the womb in water from the Niger or a well, those of the intelligence in fresh milk, those of calmness and judgment in water. On the stick representing the joints is shown the name for lion; on that representing the backbone, the word dyose, (literally, point of support); on that representing pettiness, the name for dung beetle; on that representing disorder and agitation, the words muso dãga (literally, accursed woman).

A prayer is recited over the sticks which are then grouped and counted with their numbered representation and their symbolism according to the complicated calculations whose details we will not enter upon here (1). This prayer and counting are called: faro

1. It must, nevertheless, be noted that the total of the signs is (7 x 3) + (7 x 4) or 49.

kanubaya, "love of Faro." They indicate his solicitude for his subjects and were supposedly revealed to men by the swallow messenger at the time of the first girl twins' birth.

787 826 843 Each of these measurements corresponds to a certain moral and physical behavior of man, predetermined by Faro before one's birth. It is therefore possible, by measuring the dya of a pregnant woman,

787 to know the sex of the child a woman is carrying and the character
826 which will be attributed to him by the spirit.
[843] Without further elaboration on this method of divination which implies a series of interpretations, it suffices to note that it is integrated into the system of Bambara thought and inspired by the conception he has of man's place in the universe.

Divination by the Kola Nut

787 The kola nuts which the Bambara eat and use in their sacrificial or divinatory rituals are classified into seven categories according to their form and color.

1. dangoro, red nut.
2. yeleworo, white nut.
3. sosokuworo (literally, mosquito head), a red nut pointed at one of its extremities.

/217/ 4. flaniworo (literally, twin kola), a white nut with the same signs on both its halves.

5. worodanda (literally, kola without a mouth), a nut of two colors without an apparent crack permitting it to be divided.
6. bassiworo, a dark red and very bitter nut.
7. nyeworo, a nut of light and indeterminate color.

The kola nut, "created for Faro's twin girls," is itself a symbol of duality, for both its adhering halves are easily separated. In daily life, unless the diviner has ordered it as a purification, a kola nut is not eaten by one person alone; it is divided and one of the halves given to a third person. This gesture of politeness and friendship is also the expression of the duality of man, comparable to that of the fruit itself.

[576] To give kola nuts is always a sign of deference, respect, or affection. To eat a white nut "chases away sorrow and worry." The nut without a crack is rarely eaten. As it appears to be of one piece, it has an inauspicious character. In religious ceremonies the bassiwore nuts are preferred for the boli; the ordinary red nuts, dangoro, for the other altars. The pointed nut, sosokuworo, is offered by one who wants a child. The officiator chews half the nut and spits it onto the altar before eating the other half.

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609
821 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
224 start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equipment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well as an arsenal of magic weapons.

825 The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
778 they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The
[559] animals always to be feared are never called anything else: wara-ba means lion; sa-ma, elephant; ma-li, hippopotamus; bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an application of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
231 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
552 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of
825 their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once held and which is still shown on occasion: fa-li meaning "donkey" derives from fa meaning "powerful," just as nya-ri meaning "cat" derives from nya and has the same meaning, along with ba meaning "goat."

595 A husband owes his wife food, clothing, and lodging within his means, and unless he has imprudently acquired too many wives, everything will be kept within the proper limits. In any event, he must be impartial toward all his wives on one particular point if he wants domestic tranquillity: he must honor each of them in turn with his favors.

In theory, a husband is supposed to treat his wives alike in all things, although it is apparent from the foregoing that this is practically impossible. Besides, it is usually agreed that the first wife, no matter who she is, whether slave or free, has certain prerogatives. She acts as a kind of mother to her co-wives, supervises their work and their pursuits, and issues all the supplies. With reference to her husband, she acts as confidante and adviser.

851 Filiation. This is to be regarded as the totality of facts which, for the sake of clarity, we shall divide into two groups: birth, and giving a name. [209]

● 843 Birth. A pregnant woman, by virtue of her condition, is subject to a kind of special regime whose special features are the following.

In principle, she must forego sexual relations from the moment she feels the child move until two or three months after its birth. This is not done for reasons of hygiene, but rather because the child is thought to require it as a kind of deference, without which it will die.

From the standpoint of diet, the expectant mother should be well and even abundantly fed. When possible she is given the [262] heart and liver of slaughtered wild animals; these are centers of life which, if eaten, will strengthen the child's soul and make the child a courageous individual. A pregnant woman often wants some [261] of the yellow or red clay which is sold in the markets, which [443] for some unknown reason she will eat as if it were chocolate.

She must refrain from visiting dying people, attending funerals, going into mourning, or mingling with crowds, all this in order to avoid any contact that might injure the fragile soul she is carrying.

843 A Bambara has no very exact idea of the duration of pregnancy. His deductions, based on appearances alone, lead him to believe that a child born completely formed must have been in the mother's womb longer than one less well-formed. [845] Besides, it is believed that conception may be due to some spirit who had relations with the woman (1). Children born with some

1. See above, in the chronicle of Kaarta, the tale about Deni-ba Bo, who had relations with a mabo woman who claimed a connection with a spirit in the form of a horse.

strange or abnormal characteristics are thought to be the result of such affairs, and the fact that some women give birth only to stillborn infants is attributed to the same cause.

The pregnant woman is advised to go about her domestic chores up to the very moment of [210] her confinement and, in particular, to continue to grind grain, no doubt to facilitate labor, especially for those who are mothers for the first time.

844 When the labor pains begin, the woman retires to her hut, accompanied by matrons famed for their experience in these matters. Men, including the husband, may not come near the patient.

845 If there is a breach presentation or any other complication, the women do what they can, based on their personal experience, the inspiration of the moment, or the current superstitions. As a last resort they call in the magician or the marabout, which amounts to the same thing. Neither one is allowed to see the patient, but must work from the outside, using magic passes, incantations, or prayers and prescribing suitable remedies.

844 To deliver the baby, the mother ordinarily squats with her hands behind her head or kneels with her hands against the wall. The eldest or most skillful of the attending matrons ties the umbilical cord and then cuts it. This operation is often badly done and causes the umbilical hernia with which so many natives are afflicted and which is regarded, indeed, as a deformation in

that she may speak to him freely. When the day of union comes, the wife herself prepares her husband's food; then she lies on the left side (the feminine side) and her husband on the right side, and she cannot be impregnated except by a union twice repeated.

These corporal techniques are dictated and ordered by the religious imperatives which pervade the life of the Bambara from before his birth until after his death.

What we have said of the Bambara's religion and of his conception of the world enables us to understand that there cannot be for him a complete break between life and death: birth is a reincarnation; death is not destruction. This is why a man's life does not present one substantial unity but is divided into a certain number of distinct periods, each of which is inaugurated by a rite of transition that marks the death of an anterior state and the rebirth to a new life.

a. Before Birth

From the first month after his conception, the infant constitutes a person who receives a series of spiritual forces emanating from his father's side of the family and especially from the recently deceased ancestor whose name he will receive. At the same time, he inherits all of the paternal taboos, which the mother must respect during her pregnancy. It is only after his birth, at the time he receives his name, that the infant receives the spiritual forces coming from his mother's side. These forces are transmitted through the medium of the priest and the ancestors of the priest.

From then on, the infant is required to observe all the taboos of the beings who have had a part in the composition of his personality; he thus finds himself tightly bound to the society in which he will live.

b. Birth Rites

At birth the baby is washed with millet beer (1) (to purify him)

1. For all these rites, see G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion]. [i.e., Sexual Reproduction and Childrearing; see pp. 117-119. -Ana Alyst]

755 cannot cure. In order to become fertile, a sterile woman knots one[1] around her wrist or biceps, and a strange tafo it is, taken from the skin of a monkey's hand.

Syphilitic children, covered with pimples and pustules of magnan -- the name with which they adorn this disease -- have chicken droppings for their crême Simon, and this is the ointment of ointments.

Chalk is the specific for pregnant women; to ease the mild discomforts which generally precede maternity, they draw pretty white crosses on the abdomen or on the chest, between the breasts.

2. Death

761 If sickness is not natural, there is all the more reason why death should not be. In the eyes of the Bambara there is no evil comparable to it. They fear it and its very name makes them tremble. When it is necessary for someone to announce a death or refer to it, he quite often uses a circumlocution in the presence of a member of the family. At the death of a child it is in good taste to say: "A sagira a kɔ, he has gone backwards," and if the deceased was a grown woman: "She is no more, she has ended her career, she has been buried." The politest of all the expressions concerning married men who have passed from life to death is: "A so yélémana, he has changed his dwelling." The initiates of certain sects cannot bear to be spoken to about death, and the korodouga, of the kouéré or koté sects, for example, get up and leave in displeasure, no matter how little this subject is dwelt upon in their presence.

761 The Bambara are not unaware that Moslems, missionaries, and all Europeans make light of their fetishes and scorn them; therefore in the presence of any of these they direct to God the accusation that He has caused the death of one of their people. This procedure is only a courtesy, an indirect way of respecting the belief of those to whom they speak, whose life they share, and whom they fear. They know that God has the power of life and death over human beings, but they attribute death to Him so seldom, that during seven consecutive years spent in the Sudan I did not encounter a single instance.

/48/ Death is always caused by a wicked person, by an enemy who

[1] [i.e. A tafo, a string with seven or nine knots. --Analyst]

847 And is abortion such a great crime in the eyes of the Bambara? Less serious, surely, than one might imagine. It is very common, and when a woman passes, one may overhear from the lips of the Negroes, even those of children: "a y'i kono tigné, she has destroyed the fruit of her womb." There is nothing to teach Bambara children; [847] at eight and ten years they know everything! When one listens to their conversations and lends an ear to their songs, they always revolve around the vilest subjects.

3. The Birth of a Child

842 Before birth. -- Not only is it impossible for the Bambara to accept the idea that a man could live without a wife or a woman without a husband, they likewise cannot conceive of a home without children. They desire the pleasures of fatherhood, and a couple who are healthy or, to put it better, capable of consummating the conjugal act, /166/ quickly appeal to a diviner's knowledge, however short a time they have waited to have children. They believe that sterility is the result of sorcery or an evil spell.

833 When the husband is impotent or afflicted with an illness 847 which prevents all marital relations, his wife readily becomes unfaithful and commits adultery in order to avoid the shame of sterility. Moreover, in order not to have to face a winking eye that speaks volumes or a disdainful smile which reveals everything, the husband is indulgent and even approves her crime, at least for the first times. Let us admit quickly that he can do nothing about it, for if she cannot be unfaithful, the wife will abandon herself to loud cries, demand a divorce, and reject the man, who would himself leave her if she were in a similar situation. Without approving of such indulgence, one can understand it on the part of an unfortunate who needs to keep his cook and safeguard his honor before a people that scorns an impotent man and sees nothing amiss in adultery since it is a crime that can be redeemed.

[[64] If a woman who conceives is in a syphilitic condition, which 843 is often the case, the fruit of her womb seldom comes to full term

843 but is lost after the first months -- something that is inexplicable to her. To avoid this misfortune she covers herself with grigris and talismans; she wears them on her neck, on her hips, down her breasts, on her arms. One in particular I cannot silently pass over; it is the tafo, a narrow leather thong held in the skin of a monkey's hand and knotted sometimes around the wrist and sometimes above the biceps.

842 843 782 778 A sterile woman or one subject to accidents during her pregnancies appeals to the Komo, Kono, or Nama boli fetishes, but more often to the gnena, or djine, fetishes, and above all to the dasiri fetish, the genie protector of the village. Through the intermediary of the priest, the gnena-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, she offers it hens, kola nuts, and dégé, or millet flour mixed with water. She dedicates and consecrates the fruit of her womb to the dasiri and swears an oath to offer a sacrifice worthy of it if she succeeds in carrying her child to full term.

842 843 782 778 825 I should reiterate in passing that the dasiri gnéna is not, as one might suppose, constantly sitting down or astride of a /167/ leafy branch or, if you like, enclosed in a tree trunk with bark as a fitted jacket. It walks around, readily leaves the tree, the spring, or the rock which it uses as dwelling, home, or resting place; it visits its relatives and close friends, it carouses with its companions every time a drinking bout is held in honor of one of them, and when there are no parties, it takes advantage of its freedom. It is afraid of walking with its feet on the ground, so for its romantic excursions in and around the village, it straddles its mount, which is a snake, a lizard, or a donkey, but usually, as we already know, a terrible billy goat. It is this animal, especially, that the sterile woman showers with her attentions; she often goes far into the bush to fetch a handful of tender grass which is its delicacy, and every day measures of millet and maize bran are set aside for it. When she becomes a mother, she overflows with sacrifices and acts of thanksgiving, and her child receives the name of the fetish. He will be djiriba, gnénama, or gnénamaké, as I have already said in the paragraph in which I discussed the dasiri, who is the genie protector of the village and the first of the gnéna.

843 One last discreet word about the pregnant women: Their loin-
291 cloths, the cloth rags with which they gird their hips, are held in place by means of a cord, a common string knotted below the navel, a very unsightly thing, or sometimes by means of a colored cloth, a red handkerchief, for example, folded in a triangle.

842 A male child, is more highly valued than a girl, and to obtain
789 this blessing the Bambara consult sorcerers and diviners and sacrifice to the boli fetishes. The women have great confidence in amulets, and they wear hung at the waist many dirty bags which form an ugly roll under the tafé, or loincloth (the knotted cord, tafo, is worn around the hips). Some wear their "boy bringer" where it can be seen; it is a square leather bag three fingers wide which contains medicine: bits of bark and wood, and sometimes a goat's horn which the woman slips between her thighs (1). /168/

1. This horn is also often worn in order that the child may have a perfect body, or so as not to have a premature delivery. Nicolay says that these talismans or magic objects, which are capable of changing the course of events and even of nature, are made and sold by sorcerers. /Fernand Nicolay, Curiosités des lois et coutumes. Histoire des croyances, superstitions, moeurs, usages et coutumes (selon le plan du Décalogue) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. A History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Manners, Usages and Customs (according to the Outline of the Decalogue), Paris: V. Retaux, 1901./

844 Birth of a child. -- In Bambara country the "demon" usually takes part in the joys and sorrows of the family. However, I have